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The link between lactose intolerance and gluten intolerance by [Brandon Schmid](#)

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Lactose and gluten intolerance are interrelated. Both occur due to the incapability of the body to tolerate the specific composition of lactose and gluten. Several researches carried out across the globe point out the fact that celiac disease, more commonly referred to as gluten intolerance is more common in individuals with lactose intolerance. The symptoms governing both these diseases are almost similar. These include bloating, abdominal cramps, frequent bouts of diarrhea and constipation, unexplained fatigue, loss of concentration and pain in joints. A piece of advice for the individuals who suffer from lactose intolerance: ask your doctor to examine you gluten intolerance as well.

Recent researches have also shown that when patients with celiac disease are treated for gluten intolerance, the symptoms of lactose intolerance slowly began to disappear. Several clinical trials have documented the fact that when celiac disease patients and individuals suffering from lactose intolerance were put on a gluten free diet for a period of 12 months, about 66% of the patients recovered from lactose intolerance. This further draws our attention towards the fact that when individuals are kept on gluten free diet the injured lining of the gut recovers pretty fast. This study made use of lactose breath test that is used for monitoring individual's tolerance to lactose.

This is just one part of the story. The other part says that people with celiac disease are often found to be affected with lactose intolerance. In other words, lactose intolerance is a common accompaniment of celiac disease. Let me try and explain the situation - in celiac disease, the protein composite 'gluten' when eaten triggers several autoimmune reactions inside the body, which then further injures the small intestine making it incapable of absorbing nutrients from the food. Now, the enzyme lactase that is responsible for breaking down the lactose is produced in the brush border of the small intestine. The brush border is located towards the end of the villi. Since the gluten has already injured the small intestine, hence it can no longer produce sufficient quantities of the enzyme lactase for digesting lactose. Hence, this explains the direct connection between gluten intolerance and lactose intolerance.

This is why when individuals suffering from gluten intolerance are kept on gluten free diet, they gradually show signs of recovery from lactose intolerance. This is so because, when gluten is refrained from the diet, the small intestine begins to repair itself and gradually the brush border that is located towards the end of the villi starts producing the enzyme lactase. When lactase is produced, lactose can easily be digested by the body and individuals gradually become more tolerant to lactose.

A gluten free diet helps recover from gluten intolerance and lactose intolerance as well. It needs to be understood that there are no medicines available for treating lactose intolerance. There are several dairy products available free from lactose that still gives individuals the opportunity to enjoy ice creams and milk. Lactose intolerance can also be treated by supplementing one's diet with lactase that can help digest the lactose present in dairy products.

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